

VZCZCXRO1820
OO RUEHCHI RUEHCN RUEHDT RUEHHM
DE RUEHBK #0581 0651010
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
O 061010Z MAR 09
FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6302
INFO RUEHZS/ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS PRIORITY
RUEHGB/AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD PRIORITY 0218
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING PRIORITY 6831
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA PRIORITY 9488
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 5514
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL PRIORITY 5321
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY 1437
RUEHCHI/AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI PRIORITY 6278
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI PRIORITY

UNCLAS BANGKOK 000581

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [MOPS](#) [IZ](#) [TH](#)
SUBJECT: THAI MFA ENCOURAGED BY U.S. MIDDLE EAST POLICY

REF: STATE 18283

¶1. (SBU) We engaged Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) Director of the Middle-East Division Nat Pinyowattanacheep March 6 regarding the review of U.S. policy in Iraq, including the drawdown and transformation of the U.S. force (reftel). Nat replied that the RTG found the U.S. approach encouraging and would improve the U.S. image in Southeast Asia. For its part, the Thai MFA was considering re-opening its embassy in Baghdad, though its Embassy in Amman, which covers Iraq, said the time was not yet right.

¶2. (SBU) Director Nat also inquired about U.S. policy towards Iran and the Arab-Israeli Peace Process, characterizing the U.S. role as critical to achieving peace and stability in the region, much more so than other actors such as the EU, and praising the new Administration's approach and willingness to pursue dialogue. We explained U.S. efforts, including the naming of Special Envoys Mitchell and Ross. Nat suggested that achieving progress on Gaza was important from the ASEAN perspective, given the interest of Muslims in Indonesia, Malaysia, and southern Thailand have for the suffering of Palestinian civilians in Gaza, and would also improve the standing of the U.S. in Southeast Asia.
JOHN